

## Message Text

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ACTION AID-31

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 FDRE-00 MED-02 DHA-02

OES-06 EB-07 /071 W  
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R 071420Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9441  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5957

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, US, SY, LE  
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR LEBANON

AID FOR FDA

1. ON SEPT. 6 CHARGE AND AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL DIRECTOR, DR. ASPER, CALLED ON MINHEALTH KHIAMI BEFORE ASPER'S RETURN TO BEIRUT LATER SAME AFTERNOON. ASPER EXPRESSED HOSPITAL'S APPRECIATION TO KHIAMI FOR HIS ASSISTANCE OVER PAST MONTHS IN FACILITATING FLOW OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES TO AUH. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED TO KHIAMI AUH'S POLICY OF ACCEPTING ALL COMERS REGARDLESS OF FAITH OR ORIGIN AND PROVIDING MEDICAL SERVICES TO ALL ON EQUAL BASIS. HE TOLD MINISTER THAT 45 ADDITIONAL AMERICAN NURSE VOLUNTEERS WERE BEING RECRUITED IN U.S. AND WOULD SHORTLY BE TRANSITING DAMASCUS EN ROUTE BEIRUT.

2. MINISTER, WHO IS FORMER PRESIDENT OF AUB ALUMNI ASSOCIATION IN SYRIA, SAID HE HAD BEEN HAPPY TO HELP AND EXPRESSED ADMIRATION THAT ASPER WILLING TO RETURN TO BEIRUT AND TO KEEP AUH FUNCTIONING. MINISTER WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SHORT-TERM FUTURE AND THOUGHT SOME SORT OF CHRISTIAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST WEST BEIRUT COULD

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NOT BE RULED OUT.

3. ASPER ASKED MINISTER'S REACTION TO POSSIBILITY OF STOCKPILING MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM U.S. AND EUROPEAN SOURCES IN SYRIA FOR DISPATCH AS NEEDED TO VARIOUS HOSPITALS IN LEBANON. KHIAMI REPLIED THAT SARG ITSELF HAD BEEN SENDING LARGE QUANITITES OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO HOSPITALS IN LEBANON, INCLUDING EVEN HOPSITALS IN TRIPOLI, SO MUCH IN FACT THAT OPENING OF NEW SYRIAN HOSPITALS IN HASSAKE AND RQQA HAD HAD TO BE DELAYED. IN ADDITION, HIS BUDGET FOR CURRENT YEAR WAS ALREADY VIRTUALLY EXHAUSTED. HE SAID HE HAD AMPLE ROOM IN HIS OFFICIAL WAREHOUSE FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO HELP ADMINISTER THEIR DISTRIBUTION. MINISTER CAUTIONED THAT CURRENT AUH EMERGENCY SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT HAD BEEN DIFFICULT TO SET UP AND SHOULD NOT BE TAMPERED WITH.

4. COMMENT: CHARGE AND ASPER READ MINISTER'S REACTION TO STOCKPILING PROPOSAL AS MEANING SYRIA WOULD WANT TO PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN DISTRIBUTION. WE THOUGHT, THEREFORE, THAT IDEA SHOULD NOT BE FURTHER PURSUED AT THIS TIME.

CURRENT AUH ARRANGEMENT REQUIRES SEALING SUPPLIES BY SYRIAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES AT DAMASCUA AIRPORT FOR FIRECT TRANSIT TO LEBANON. IN ADDITION, COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE SPACE IN DAMASCUS IS VIRTUALLY UNOBTAINABLE.  
PEWLETREAU

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